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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SBA CELEBRATES OLYMPIC YEAR WITH PLAYERS' INCENTIVE**

#### ***Family support integral to success of badminton players***

***Singapore, Wednesday 2 October 2024*** – In commemorating 2024 as the year of the Summer Olympics, Singapore Badminton Association (SBA) celebrated the sacrifices, effort and dedication of its national team players and their families in an appreciation event today at the Singapore Swimming Club.

For the first time, fourteen full-time athletes on the national team will receive an incentive of \$5,000 to recognise their commitment to the sport, and to encourage them to focus on qualifying for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. One part-time athlete will receive \$2,500.

The incentive will be in the form of \$4,000 cash and \$1,000 NTUC FairPrice voucher. Vice President (Pathway & Development) of SBA, Mr Arun Cavale, 49, said: “It is integral to the sport of badminton in Singapore that players and their families are fully committed to the sporting journey together. While we are a player-centric organisation, we also value the contributions of parents, siblings and spouses. We want to show our gratitude to the families with the gift of a FairPrice voucher.”

Regarding some of the initiatives the newly elected board of the SBA will focus on, Mr Cavale said: “Our ambition is to become a leading badminton nation, with multiple players ranked in the top 50 in the world in every discipline. For that to happen, more players should enter the system. We are either establishing, or have put in place, player development funds, career-counselling, and post-career support programmes. We are continually seeking corporate partnerships and sponsorships. It is important that players and their parents see badminton as a viable career.”

President of SBA, Mr Lawrence Leow, 65, who was re-elected for another two-year term at SBA's 88th Annual General Meeting last month, said: “We often focus on the Olympians, but those who have dedicated years of their lives training to qualify for the Olympics should be celebrated too. I am looking forward to the next generation stepping up in the next Olympic Games. Along the way, I'm confident that they will inspire many more young Singaporeans to pursue the sport of badminton as a career.” In his new term, Mr Leow aims to focus on building

a strong talent pipeline, growing the base of both recreational and competitive players, augmenting the gratuity fund for retiring players and establishing a tailored athlete life coaching programme. Three new members joined the SBA board, including law professor and communications specialist David Tan, 54, who is co-director of the Centre for Technology, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence & the Law at the National University of Singapore, and formerly director of sports at the then-Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.

Indeed some of the next generation players have made good headway after the conclusion of the Paris Olympics. Men's doubles pair, Wesley Koh Eng Keat, 22, and Kubo Junsuke, 22, who only completed their National Service in July 2024, won the Polish International on 22 September. Jason Teh Jia Heng, 24, was runner-up at the Macau Open Super 300 on Sunday. Yeo Jia Min, 25, who is the first Singaporean female singles player to reach the knockout stages of the Olympics since 2012, is already focused on the 2028 Olympics. She said: "This year's Olympics was a valuable experience to me. Leading up to the next Olympics, I need to keep reflecting after every loss to mature more and increase my ability. My goal is to be world champion and I want to challenge myself."

Mr Melvin Lau, father of current men's singles player Marcus Phil Lau Jun Hui, 19, is optimistic about the future of badminton in Singapore: "I'm grateful that SBA is recognising all of our combined efforts to put Singapore on the world map through the sport of badminton. I will certainly support my son, and hope to see him on that podium one day with me singing Majullah Singapura proudly along with him."

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